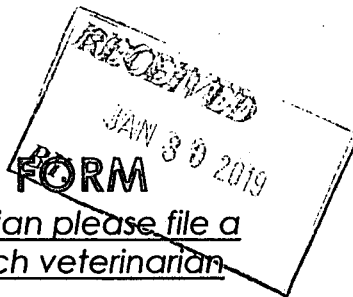


ARIZONA STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD
1740 W. ADAMS ST., SUITE 4600, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007
PHONE (602) 364-1PET (1738) FAX (602) 364-1039
VETBOARD.AZ.GOV

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION FORM

If there is an issue with more than one veterinarian please file a separate Complaint Investigation Form for each veterinarian



PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: Jan 30, 2019 Case Number: 19-55

A. THIS COMPLAINT IS FILED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING:

Name of Veterinarian/CVT: Suzanne Higgins
Premise Name: Deer Creek Animal Hospital
Premise Address: 3025 E Rose Garden Ln
City: Phoenix State: Arizona Zip Code: 85345
Telephone: 602-404-066

B. INFORMATION REGARDING THE INDIVIDUAL FILING COMPLAINT*:

Name: Rigo Torres
Address: [REDACTED]
City: [REDACTED] State: [REDACTED] Zip Code: [REDACTED]
Home Telephone: [REDACTED] Cell Telephone: [REDACTED]

*STATE LAW REQUIRES WE HAVE TO DISCLOSE YOUR NAME UNLESS WE CAN SHOW THAT DISCLOSURE WILL RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL HARM TO YOU, SOMEONE ELSE OR THE PUBLIC PER A.R.S. § 41-1010. IF YOU HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SUBSTANTIAL HARM WILL RESULT IN DISCLOSURE OF YOUR NAME PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES OF RESTRAINING ORDERS OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION.

C. PATIENT INFORMATION (1):

Name: _____

Breed/Species: _____

Age: _____ Sex: _____ Color: _____

PATIENT INFORMATION (2):

Name: _____

Breed/Species: _____

Age: _____ Sex: _____ Color: _____

D. VETERINARIANS WHO HAVE PROVIDED CARE TO THIS PET FOR THIS ISSUE:

Please provide the name, address and phone number for each veterinarian.

E. WITNESS INFORMATION:

Please provide the name, address and phone number of each witness that has direct knowledge regarding this case.

Sharon Jaques

Attestation of Person Requesting Investigation

By signing this form, I declare that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Further, I authorize the release of any and all medical records or information necessary to complete the investigation of this case.

Signature:  _____

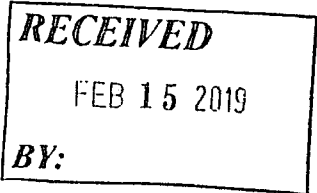
Date: 1/30/2019

F. ALLEGATIONS and/or CONCERNS:

Please provide all information that you feel is relevant to the complaint. This portion must be either typewritten or clearly printed in ink.

On August 14, 2018 at approximately 7:30 AM during my working interview at Deer Creek Animal Hospital I was attacked by a Black and White Pit Bull named "Herschel". I was immediately taken to the back area of the hospital by General Manager Kellie McLamb where a technician cleaned all of my wounds with an unknown solution and gauze. I was also given an unknown orange pill that was going to help me with the pain according to several staff members who's names I cannot remember. After my wounds were cleaned I was given 40 capsules of Cephalexin and two bags of Chlorhexidine Solution to take home which were prescribed by Suzanne Higgins. After being sent home I was very concerned due to the fact that Suzanne Higgins was not present at the time of the incident and did not physically see my wounds in order to prescribe any medication.

See attached photos



February 10, 2019

Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board
1740 W Adams St., Suite 4600
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Re: Case 19-55

Dear Examining Board:

Rigo Torres and Sharon Jacques are disgruntled, ex-employees of Deer Creek Animal Hospital. Sharon is a relative of Rigo. The following is an account pieced together from the reports of staff members. I was not in the hospital on August 14, 2018 and did not learn of the alleged bite incident until the following day.

On August 14, 2018, Rigo claimed that a dog in the play yard of Deer Creek bit him. No one in the yard witnessed this bite. According to other staff members, they heard Rigo yell and turned to see a dog named "Herschel" running away from him. (See exhibit 1-Incident Report by Jordan Atanasio)

After the alleged bite, Kellie McLamb, my Office Manager, offered to take Rigo to urgent care multiple times. Rigo insisted that he was fine and refused to be taken or to drive himself to seek medical attention. The supposed bite area was covered by clothing so Kellie did not see it. Kellie offered to have a technician clean the area. A technician may have cleaned his supposed bite wound, but no one witnessed this. Rigo was given our workman's compensation information in case he felt he needed to seek medical attention. Rigo went to urgent care later that evening and was treated for something. We did not receive a doctor's report. Rigo said he was cleared to return to work and worked a full shift the following day. He reported to Kellie McLamb and multiple other employees on August 15, 2018, that he was fine. His supposed bite wound was covered by clothing, so it was not visible to anyone. I have no knowledge of anyone giving medications to Rigo. I was not working on August 14th, 2018 and not at the hospital. I did not see Rigo or prescribe anything. (See exhibit 2-Statement of Kellie McLamb, Office Manager.)

The photos show medications prescribed for my personal dog, "Furst". He is being treated for chronic osteomyelitis. These items were prepared for Furst, but were nowhere to be found when I went to take them home on August 15th, 2018. I had to have a technician refill them a second time. (See exhibit 3 -Furst's radiograph)

Sharon Jacques, who is listed as a witness, was not working on August 14, 2018 and therefore was not a witness to anything that occurred earlier that day. Sharon was in the hospital later that evening when she came to attend an employee staff meeting. The meeting was for front desk staff only so there were only a few people in the building that evening. (See exhibit 4- Sharon's time card.)

Several days after the supposed bite incident, Deer Creek staff began receiving calls and faxes from a law firm requesting information about this incident and personal contact information for Herschel's owner. Rigo denied knowing anything about this law firm and why they were contacting us. Later it was learned that Rigo attempting to file a frivolous lawsuit against my client, Herschel's owner. (See exhibit 5 -Information request from Rigo's attorney)

Rigo was attempting to sue for medical bills, pain and suffering. Rigo obtained my client's personal contact information without permission and forwarded it to his attorney. Rigo likely had the assistance of Sharon Jacques's in obtaining this information. Rigo's single doctor visit for his supposed bite was covered by worker's compensation insurance, so he paid nothing. Rigo returned to work the very next day and stated that he was fine to multiple people. Rigo did not seek any further medical care and his worker's compensation claim was officially closed on August 31, 2018. Rigo did not mention of any further concerns resulting from the supposed dog bite. (See exhibit 6 -Workman's compensation Notice of Claim Status.)

On November 24th, 2018, Rigo claimed another dog bit him. No one witnessed this bite either. The area where Rigo was allegedly bitten was also covered by clothing and no one saw a wound. James Rodriguez, Kennel supervisor, reported that Rigo claimed he was bitten on his upper thigh. James insisted that Rigo seek medical attention immediately and sent him to do so. I received a doctor's report from Rigo's visit on November 24th, 2018. The doctor stated she found a "scabbed over" wound on Rigo's right knee. A wound does not scab over in 7 hours nor change locations. Rigo returned to work his next scheduled shift and reported that he was fine to James. It is believed that Rigo falsified this bite incident. (See exhibit 7 - Worker's & Physician's Report of Injury.)

James Rodriguez reported to me that Rigo would allow dogs to play very roughly and would not intervene to prevent possible altercations. Rigo continued to allow this to occur despite multiple warnings. Two other employees noticed the same behavior from Rigo. It was if Rigo wanted the dogs to get into an altercation. Perhaps he was attempting to set up a situation where he could claim he was bitten once again. (See exhibit 8-Statement of James Rodriguez, Kennel Supervisor.)

I recently learned the Rigo has been harassing a female ex-coworker while dating different girl. Kaitlin Butler filed a restraining order against Rigo to stop his unwanted contact. Rigo had apparently been calling and texting Kaitlin since April of 2017. Kaitlin became very concerned when Rigo began texting maps with her home address marked on them. This speaks to the character of Rigo Torres. (See exhibit 9- Copy of Harassment Injunction against Rigo Torres.)

At some point, Rigo must have realized that his dog bite scheme was not working as planned. Perhaps he learned that his attempted lawsuit was defunct and then became disgruntled. His attitude continued to decline and Rigo was terminated. I believe Rigo and Sharon are angry over their termination decided to retaliate by filing false claims with the veterinary examining board.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne M Higgins', written in a cursive style.

Suzanne M Higgins, DVM

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
- GOVERNOR -



VICTORIA WHITMORE
- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -

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INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION REPORT

TO: Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board

FROM: Investigative Division

RE: Case: 19-55

Complainant(s): Rigo Torres

Respondent(s): Suzanne Higgins, D.V.M. (License: 2052)

SUMMARY:

Complaint Received at Board Office: 1/30/19
Board Discussion: 3/20/19

APPLICABLE STATUTES AND RULES:

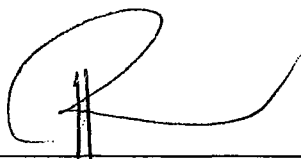
Laws as Amended August 2018
(Lime Green); Rules as Revised
September 2013 (Yellow)

On August 14, 2018, Complainant states that he was bitten by a dog while working at Deer Creek Animal Hospital. His wounds were cleaned and he was given Cephalexin and Chlorhexadine solution to clean wounds by Respondent's staff.

PROPOSED 'FINDINGS of FACT':

1. On August 14, 2018, Complainant states he was bitten by a dog while working at Deer Creek Animal Hospital. A technician cleaned his wounds with an unknown solution. He was given an unknown orange pill for pain as well as 40 capsules of Cephalexin 500mg and two bags of Chlorhexadine solution prescribed by Respondent. Respondent was not present at the time of the incident and did not physically see the wounds.
2. According to Respondent, no one witnessed the bite that Mr. Torres alleged occurred. The office manager, Ms. McLamb, offered to take Rigo to urgent care, which Mr. Torres declined stating her was fine.
3. Respondent further stated that she has no knowledge of anyone giving medications to Mr. Torres. She was not working that day.
4. The medications that Mr. Torres states were dispensed to him were under "Furst" Higgins, Respondent's dog. According to Respondent, "Furst" is being treated for chronic osteomyelitis. The medications were prepared for "Furst" but were nowhere to be found when Respondent went to collect them and take them home the following day, August 15, 2018. Respondent had to have a technician fill the medication a second time.
5. On February 28, 2019, a copy of the dog's medical record was obtained during a premise inspection. The medical records do not indicate Cephalexin and Chlorhexadine solution was dispensed for Respondent's dog on either the 14th or 15th of August. The dog was not diagnosed with osteomyelitis until September 7, 2018 and Cipro 500mg (3 tablets once a day) and Cefpodoxime 200mg (3 tablets once a day) were dispensed.

The information contained in this report was obtained from the case file, which includes the complaint, the respondent's response, any consulting veterinarian or witness input, and any other sources used to gather information for the investigation.



Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT
Investigative Division